



ARIZONA MILITARY REGIONAL COMPATIBILITY PROJECT

WESTERN MARICOPA COUNTY/LUKE AIR FORCE BASE

Project Update # 8, February 14, 2003

The Western Maricopa County/Luke Air Force Base component of the Arizona Military Regional Compatibility Project is an effort to identify permanent resolutions to land use compatibility issues around Luke Air Force Base through collaborative effort and strong implementation. This update is one of a series that will be distributed throughout the project to keep stakeholders and other interested parties up to date on project progress.

RECAP OF PROJECT PURPOSE

As the current phase of the statewide effort approaches completion, here is a brief recap of some important project elements.

Senate Bill 1120 (May 2001) appropriated funds to develop comprehensive land use plans in the noise and accident potential zones surrounding active military airports. It requires planning agencies and consultants to give priority attention to military airports in Maricopa County and communicate and consult with affected landowners, affected counties and municipalities, and other interested parties. The legislation directed the Arizona Department of Commerce to guide the process and endeavor to provide tools to address and identify resolutions to land use conflicts that might impact the ability of Luke Air Force Base to conduct its mission. In addition, the project delves into landowner compensation and funding mechanisms for land acquisition among other implementation measures.

In part, project parameters include review and analysis of existing data, plans, and studies for points of conflict and consistency among surrounding communities; acceptable and feasible uses of land in noise and accident potential zones (of Luke Air Force Base); consideration of compatibility with adjacent uses and economic viability; development of a strong implementation plan; establishment of criteria for development rights compensation; and financing mechanisms.

For more details, please review the specific scope of work at:

<http://www.azcommerce.com/CommunityPlanning/LukeBackground.htm>

Cooperation towards a common goal has propelled this project, and continued collaboration of participating communities and stakeholders throughout the process is paramount. The power to make the Regional Compatibility Plan a success lies in the hands of the communities who choose to utilize the ideas to benefit not only themselves but their West Valley neighbors as well.

COMMENTS ON DRAFT COMPATIBILITY PLAN

Over 500 comments on the Draft Compatibility Plan from the West Valley & Luke Regional Land Use Compatibility Plan Open House II, the interest group meetings, and written correspondence were collected and analyzed by the Project Team. Thank you to all project stakeholders for your continued involvement and enthusiasm. The Project Team is incorporating the relevant input in the Final Plan that is targeted for release in early March.

WEST VALLEY COMPATIBILITY AREA

A majority of comments received by the Project Team encouraged the expansion of the noise notification area to include the over flights from Luke Air Force Base. Luke Air Force Base and local jurisdictions noted that more than 60 percent of recent noise complaints came from persons living and working outside the existing notification area – the legislatively defined territory in the vicinity of an active military airport (or the “Box”). The Project Team is working with Luke Air Force Base to define the area that lies under the majority of the flight tracks for inclusion in an expanded notification area.

At its February meeting, the Fighter Country Coalition recommended that the boundaries of an expanded noise notification area be defined by the Maricopa County line on the north, west, and south and the 51st Avenue alignment on the east. The Final Plan will recognize this approach, although the formal Project Team recommendation for notification boundaries will remain closely aligned with primary overflight routes utilized by Luke student pilots.

RANGE ACCESS ROUTES

Numerous comments on the Draft Plan supported the protection of the access routes to the Barry M. Goldwater Range (BMGR) in southern Arizona. The base identifies these routes as the “Range Access Routes.” These routes are airspace corridors used by military aircraft carrying live ordnance from Luke Air Force Base to the range. The Range Access Routes extend from the end of the Southern Departure Corridor at Luke Air Force Base to the individual ranges within BMGR.

The Final Plan will include recommendations for the protection of the Southern Departure Corridor and the Range Access Routes. The protection of these corridors is essential to preserving the mission of Luke Air Force Base.

MODEL ORDINANCE – DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS

Communication between jurisdictions and Luke Air Force Base during the development application process has been a recurring stakeholder issue over the course of the Compatibility Project. Work has begun in the creation of a process to ensure coordination on development proposals that affect land within the “Box.” The proposed process must

- address critical safety and noise concerns,
- provide for consistency over time (i.e., transcend changes in base command or in jurisdictions) and among jurisdictions,
- clarify expectations for all parties as to the process for development applications in the “Box” by improving communication, and
- comply with state legislation.

Several successful strategies have emerged for communication between planning staffs and the base: early information for both the base and applicants (pre-application stage), informal dialogue and providing the opportunity for all parties to field questions and follow up, and the establishment of criteria by the base to provide a basic set of expectations on areas and uses of concern within the “Box.” In addition, continuing education on legislation that affects planning in the vicinity of Luke Air Force Base is needed.

A working group of the Fighter Country Coalition continues development of this process, which is anticipated to ultimately become a model ordinance for adoption by local jurisdictions and the base. This model development review process ordinance will also be included in the Final Compatibility Plan.

LUKE AFB WEIGHS IN SUPPORT

The following is an excerpt from an official comment letter from Brigadier General (S) Philip Breedlove, Commander, 56th Fighter Wing, Luke Air Force Base, regarding the Draft Western Maricopa County/ Luke Air Force Base Regional Compatibility Plan.

Luke Supports the following actions:

- Continuing efforts on the Arizona Department of Commerce’s land use compatibility study to amend the draft to a more workable solution for all.

- Expanding the “Box” to a “West Valley Compatibility Area” to cover all areas that Luke flight paths cover, including Aux 1, west of the White Tank Mountains, etc.
- Comprehensive disclosure requirements to new home buyers in the expanded area.
- Energy efficiency (sound attenuation) in new homes in the expanded area.
- A requirement for developers and political subdivisions to keep channels of communication open and to notify Luke of new developments in the “West Valley Compatibility Area.”

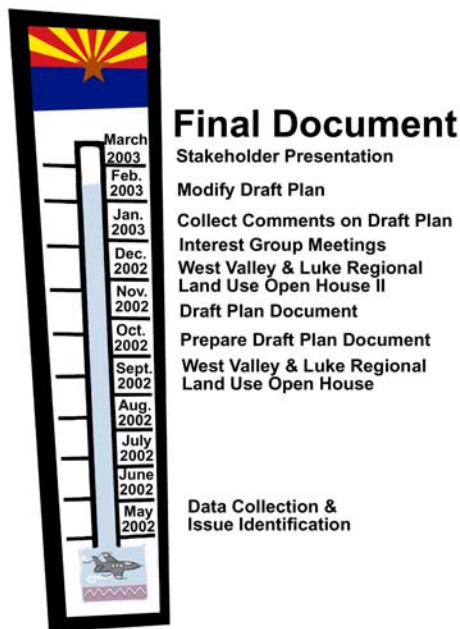
CLARIFICATION OF HB 2385 BY THE SPONSOR

It has been brought to my attention that the Luke Bill [HB 2385] I sponsored is believed by some to create a moratorium around Luke Air Force Base. This is not the case. As everyone involved knows, a moratorium was not supported as one of the solutions acceptable to the study group. House Bill 2385 was originally intended to be a vehicle bill if legislation was needed for Luke Air Force Base issues this year. Based on recent discussions with stakeholders, I am currently working to kill the bill. If there are further questions, please call me at (602) 542-5872.

Thank you,

Representative John Nelson
Arizona State Legislature
District 12

NEXT STEPS



February 2003: Continue to Modify Draft Regional Compatibility Plan. The project team will continue to update and modify the Draft Plan based on discussions and comments received. Conference call meetings with various stakeholders are occurring as well.

March 7, 2003: Planned Release Date of Final Regional Compatibility Plan. After considering the comments and discussions from the December open house and interest group meetings, the Arizona Department of Commerce will release the Final Western Maricopa County/Luke Air Force Base Regional Compatibility Plan.

March 21, 2003: Stakeholder Presentation. The Arizona Department of Commerce will host a stakeholder presentation on the Final Western Maricopa County/Luke Air Force Base Regional Compatibility Plan. The purpose of the presentation is to inform the stakeholders of the Final Plan that provides a framework for future actions to achieve compatible land uses, addresses

compensation and funding mechanisms, and works to preserve the mission of Luke Air Force Base. The stakeholder presentation is tentatively scheduled to take place on Friday, March 21, from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Glendale Main Public Library on Brown Street.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS EFFORT

To find information, provide feedback, or ask questions, please visit the project web site via www.azcommerce.com, or contact Deb Sydenham, AICP, Director, Community Planning Office, Arizona Department of Commerce at (602) 280-8114 or debs@azcommerce.com.